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I enjoy taking the car to autokhanas and the occasional few laps at Barbagallo Raceway (fastest lap so far is 71sec), but I also enjoy driving it every day. It is such an iconic car. I still give it a last look as I leave the car park in the morning." – Brendan Fitzgerald, GT-R Owner **PG**



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FIND US ON



FOUNDATIONS

It was given to me for the bargain price of free. An inheritance from a great uncle who had passed away, his little runaround Mazda three-door panel van became my first car. It was two-tone beige and rust, and packed a three-speed auto and a mighty 1500cc engine that was said to make 87hp. There is no way it made 87hp.

It was slower than slow, slipped between gears and when it was up to temperature the transmission leaked onto the exhaust and the smoke from the burnt ATF meant I was as high as a kite by the time I got to work each day. But beggars aren't often choosers and I consoled myself with the fact that, despite any lasting brain damage from inhaling burnt oil, I would soon be able to afford a new car to replace it.

About six months or so later I bought that first new car. Fresh off the lot in Arctic White, my brand new ride also had a 1500cc engine however this time it made more like 92hp (settle down, turbo!) and had a manual transmission with no leaks so I could drive the 100 or so kilometres to work without damaging synapses.

It had air conditioning instead of window winders and a stereo that included this amazing new technology called FM. It smelled just like a new car is supposed to and it used almost no fuel, despite the hiding it copped whenever the urge struck, which was often. Short of binning it from driving like a tool I had no worries with this car.

I didn't have to worry about it breaking down because it was a brand new car with warranty, and with a factory fitted immobiliser and full comprehensive insurance I wasn't too fazed about it being stolen either. For all the things it did well it should have been the perfect car. It ticked all the boxes it needed to, including speed. I mean, it didn't have any but in hindsight the older me is glad the younger me drove a slow car at that point.

But it wasn't perfect. It did everything I asked of it, it went wherever I wanted it to go, used bugger-all petrol and was a reasonable platform to build on for the types of modifications that were popular at the time (yes, I mean wheels and stereo, please don't judge me), but there was something missing. It didn't have any character. It was soulless. An appliance. Rather like a fridge.

Nothing like my little Mazda panel van that, were it a person, would be an eager but unbearably smelly hobo, always ready to take you for a ride just so long as you didn't mind smelling just like him when you got there. It had character, yes, but it was also character building. And while it made me appreciate the niceties of a brand new ride it also made me appreciate the nuances and foibles that only come from cars with soul – a fact that anyone made to drive a total shit-box for any amount of time will understand.

The truth is that no matter how well engineered, built or finished a machine is, it's never perfect. Given the chance every car will eventually break down or wear out and it's up to you to learn its ways, tend to its mechanical needs and keep it going for as long as you need it. Occasionally though that broken down smelly hobo of a car that you curse every time you get behind the wheel will sneak into your heart and then long after it's gone you'll find yourself wishing you had it to drive one more time.

See you next time.

Adrian

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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE RIDE

Welcome to Issue 46 of *Performance Garage*. It only seems like yesterday when Editor Adrian 'Hodosan' Hodgson contacted me and asked if I would come on board. They say time flies when you're having fun so 46 issues later this journey has been a hoot. Regular readers know I'm a motoring buff, I love cars, but more importantly I get off on driving them.

For some, owning a restored classic rocks their world, and good on you. You people invest bucket-loads of hard earned coin in toys that delight past generations, present and future. You could say you're the custodians of motoring history and if it was not for your enthusiasm cars would end up as land fill. If you're one of those 'gunna' people, you know the idea is in your head but you lack motivation, why not just do it! This magazine see's amazing street cars, competition vehicles feature and I can guarantee many of you have dreamed of following that inspiration.

So the mental hand brake got activated, hey, you were gunna but, but, but. We humans are really good at wanting to do things but like a coin it has two sides. Call it yin or yang, yes or no, try positive or negative. The brain is our greatest asset; it can be programmed to function in positive ways only if we feed it with the right messages. Keep telling yourself, 'it will not happen,' now say this everyday over and over. The grey sponge in your head takes this as an order directed by you so this instruction must be what you want. Over a period of time this programming will train your brain to act in this manner.

A motor requires fuel. Imagine a high compression big grunt engine costing mega bucks being powered with low grade cheap petrol. The human engine or 'brain power' will deliver outstanding performance thinking, this in turn will clear objections only if programmed correctly. Dreaming of owning that Performance Garage inspired machine is just that, a dream. Doing something about it requires a strategy! Firstly cut out the picture or pictures and stick these on your bedroom wall. For those who are married, can I suggest this might not be the smartest place to check out your dream machine. Find a place that you see on a daily basis, this will keep your dreams alive, it will inspire you generating positive thinking; this in turn will help you achieve your goal.

I get asked many times about driving and what type of cars tick my bucket list? How long is a piece of string? Sure a mega mumbo tyre frying weapon will give your heart a great adrenalin hit, but if it does not handle then it falls short in my eyes. Going around corners is a pre-requisite and responsive steering feedback is a must. Now throw into the mix vehicle dynamics that covers pitch and roll.

Suspension on cars is a bunch of components that must complement each other similar to families. Probably not the best analogy, but it's the best example I would think of. At family gatherings everyone is around the dining table talking, some listening, great conversation and laughter. Now a bomb is dropped and a misguided word or comment sees the mood swing into an explosive situation. The dynamics are wrong, everyone is talking over the top of each other, no one is listening, things are about to get ugly. If vehicle suspension is not tuned to suit the driving environment, its occupants/family could also be in for an ugly ride!

I remember when Holden launched R.T.S, known as Radial Tuned Suspension and for its time this was a marketing masterstroke. Today's competitive car industry sees manufacturers looking for an edge with handling a key driver! Electronic speed sensitive power steering allows any driver the ability to safely navigate our busy driving environment. At highway speeds very little steering is needed making lane changing a breeze. Sadly there are many drivers that think its ok to drive one handed. In a perfect world not a problem, however if things turned pear shape, a one handed steerer would grab a fistful of lock and kapow. Next thing the blame game, the car went out of control, it went off the road, like it happened without human intervention. Statistics show that 95% of motor vehicle accidents can be attributed to human error. The latest 5 star safety vehicles are engineered to the highest standards with dynamic handling a consumer driven requirement. How sad it is that many one star drivers are let loose on our roads and they have no idea what to do in an emergency situation.

For me the race track and dragstrip provides a legal environment to enjoy a vehicles full potential.

See ya' in the pits!
Ian 'Luffy' Luff

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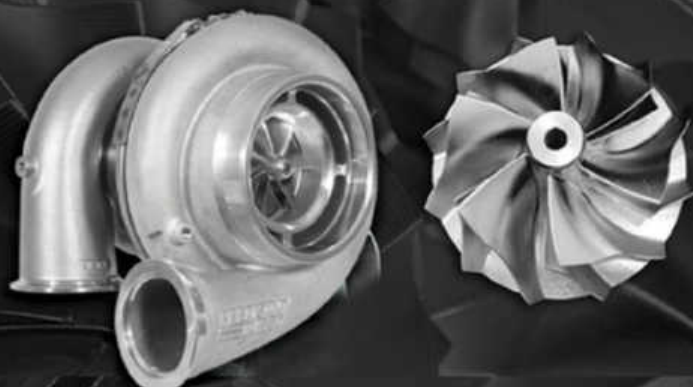


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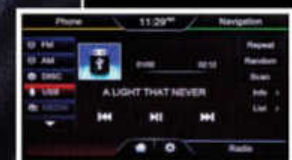
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XA-LENT WORK



Brett Cowles has bought and restored more XA GT and GS Falcons than any amateur we know, and now he and a mate have turned professional

STORY BY SAM HOLLIER PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL WARD

**KILLER SHED:
BRETT COWLES
XA RESTORER**

45 year old full-time earthmoving business owner and part-time vehicle restorer Brett Cowles has been a fan of Falcon GTs since he was a teenager. There were two cars in particular that he remembers from his formative years and he has managed to stumble across, purchase and restore both of them. The pair are also XA Falcon GTs that we'll talk about in a bit more detail shortly.

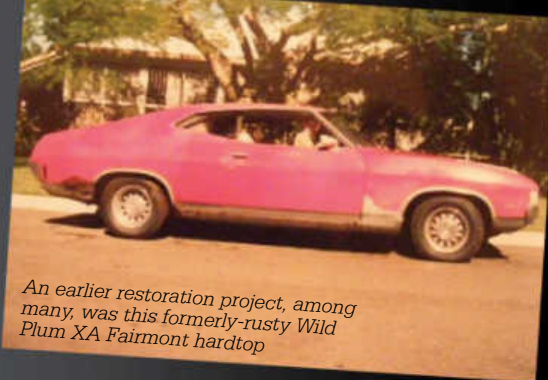
Brett bought his first Falcon GT in 1988. It was an Ultra White XA GT sedan with black trim, and it certainly helps explain his nostalgic attachment to the model and to the Aussie muscle car era. However, Falcon GT clubs weren't quite so inclusive as they are these days and since the vehicle wasn't quite original his local organisation wasn't as welcoming as they could have been.

Brett and his wife Lisa began buying and selling cars together, mostly GTs, back in the 1990s when they were still quite cheap - probably at about their lowest-ever dollar value actually - and nobody could have predicted the skyrocketing values funded by the housing boom of the following decade. That, along with not being quite so fussy with originality back then, makes them long-term serious enthusiasts not just investor-style collectors.

The couple live in South-East Queensland with their four boys; Jeremy (15), Lachlan (12), Ryan (10) and Levi (7). Before they started their family they actually sold the cars and played motocross for a while, then bought a house before getting back into their classic Aussie Fords again.

Brett told us that he was shown how to do panel beating by a neighbour friend of his named Adam back when Brett was still in his 20s. He has used this knowledge to great effect in the years since, restoring cars not only for himself and Lisa to enjoy, but for other people as well.

Brett has painted cars for friends and, with another mate named Jason, has recently kicked off a new business called Restoring People's Dreams. The pair has begun doing restoration work for customers, applying their knowledge and skills for anyone without the time or ability to restore their special or classic vehicle themselves (and not just Fords). They have a Facebook page if you're curious to see what they're working on at the moment.



An earlier restoration project, among many, was this formerly-rusty Wild Plum XA Fairmont hardtop

**RESTORING THESE CARS IS
WHAT BRETT IS GOOD AT AND
WHAT HE LIKES TO DO**





The latest project is this XA Fairmont GS hardtop. It's being restored back to its original specs of 351ci V8, auto, sunroof and Onyx Black paint

KILLER SHED:
BRETT COWLES
XA RESTORER



Brett first saw the rare Onyx Black and Lime Glaze XA GT sedan in the 1985 GT calendar when he was still a teenager



“THIS WAS THE PINNACLE AND COMPLETE SATISFACTION THAT NO TROPHY COULD EVER COME CLOSE TO”

THE SHED

Apart from being a generous size with five roller doors and a quintuple carport attached, the shed has something on many amateur mechanics' wish list, a 2-post hoist in the right-most bay. There are also hydraulic vehicle positioning jacks, a large low-profile vehicle jack, a chassis dolly, a rotisserie, a wide variety of hand tools and power tools, an air compressor for a hose reel and air tools, a MIG welder, a 6/12-volt fast charger, a substantial amount of light,

lots of work bench space and loads of shelf space holding tools, spares and all sorts.

LIME GLAZE

Not long before he turned 15 Brett saw a rare Onyx Black XA GT sedan with Lime Glaze blackouts – the colours inverted from what they normally are on one of these vehicles – in a 1985 GT calendar. “For me; that is when I knew I wanted the car” says Brett. He actually managed to keep track of it for a little while, because he knew two of its early

owners, but for more than two decades its whereabouts were a mystery to him.

“I have a friend that has a sister car to this and he had tracked down a few of the owners of the only eight Onyx Black XA GT sedans ever built. He knew my obsession for owning a factory black XA GT sedan and the fact I wanted the Lime Glaze car. Then one day out of the blue he called and said he just purchased the car. It had been sitting in a shipping container in a backyard south west of Brisbane right under my nose. I was happy that, out of anyone, he had it.”



KILLER SHED:
BRETT COWLES
XA RESTORER

BRETT AND HIS WIFE LISA BEGAN BUYING AND SELLING CARS TOGETHER, MOSTLY GTs, BACK IN THE 1990s

This friend was going to restore it himself then “he called a week before Easter 2011 and asked if I wanted to purchase the car. Within a week I had the money and a mate and I took the nine hour drive to pick it up” Brett recalls. “When I got it home it had that real survivor look. Although it had been restored in the late ’80s, I loved the patina of it from sitting for so long. And I was so happy that it still had its matching numbered 351 4V motor.”

Brett has since repainted it, as well as disassembled the original matching-numbers 4V motor and taken the major re-useable parts to a mate’s machine

shop, Precision Engine Reconditioning. Then with another mate, Perry Evens, “after a few beers it was assembled at home in the shed.”

He then put his 2-poster to good use. “After it was painted, it was put on the hoist. Every bolt was taken from under the car, cleaned and photographed because the underside of this car was amazing. It still had most of its factory QC paint makings. These were re-painted or re-anodized. The original diff was removed and the diff centre, along with the factory Toploader, were given to another mate, Graham ‘Raffie’ Williams, for a complete overhaul.”



**KILLER SHED:
BRETT COWLES
XA RESTORER**

The parents of the Wild Violet GT's former owner (who has passed away) were very pleased to see that the car is now better than new

Little Levi (now 7) helping with what is now mum's (Lisa's) Wild Violet XA GT hardtop

WILD VIOLET

The other car from Brett's youth that he acquired is the Wild Violet XA GT hardtop. "I first saw this car back when I was growing up around Wynnum in QLD. It was always clean and very well-kept. It was always at the Brisbane Hot Rod Show and drew a crowd. Like all good cars of your youth they seem to disappear without a trace but live on in your memory. For me it was this car with

its sunroof, power windows, power steer, air-conditioning, front and rear spoilers, and black bonnet; all factory. It was the car that I always wanted. That was in about 1990-ish."

It was 2006 when a mate dropped in to say he knew of a rare purple XA GT hardtop for sale. After the seller had some second thoughts Brett convinced him to part with it and then called another mate to check if it might be the exact same car he remembered from over 15 years earlier.

"He ran the numbers to give us the list of options the car had. He told me that it was the car from Wynnum and I was stoked. I then wondered how a car in such mint condition could get so run down in 15 or so years. The paint was sad, the trim was sad, it was a real shock" Brett exclaimed. "I knew the parents of one of the early owners – unfortunately he is not with us today – and I told them that I have their son's old car."

They came and had a look but its sorry state just made them sad. However, this spurred Brett to do an even more fantastic job of accurately restoring this example than he already would have anyway. It

didn't start straight away though; its bare-metal nut-and-bolt concourse-correct job began in mid-2012 and after more time than he thought it would take, more effort than he thought he was capable of, and help from more mates than he realised he had, it was completed in early 2015.

"Its first major run was to the parents of the guy who owned it years ago. For me this was the pinnacle and complete satisfaction that no trophy could ever come close to. For them to see and comment that it's now better than when they had it, and out of anyone they are so happy that I own it today, this was worth the whole journey of the rebuild."

And then "when we got home I passed the keys to my wife and said 'this is for you' so the car has another new owner."

LATEST ADDITIONS (AND SUBTRACTION)

Another vehicle in the shed is a Red Pepper XA GT sedan that has been sold and was just being held in storage until the new owner had somewhere safe to put it. One that Brett is keeping is a black XW 6-cyl with 3-on-the-tree. It is getting cleaned up a bit, rather than restored, and will hit the streets for cruising pretty much the way it is now.



We're yet to meet a person who works on their own cars and wouldn't also want a big shed with a hoist

**KILLER SHED:
BRETT COWLES
XA RESTORER**



The Red Pepper XA GT sedan has been sold and is being stored for the new owner until they are ready to collect it



**"WHEN I GOT IT HOME IT HAD THAT
REAL SURVIVOR LOOK"**



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The other project is an Onyx Black Fairmont GS hardtop. This car is a bit special because it was fitted with a 351ci Cleveland V8 by the factory. It is also an auto with a sunroof and power windows. The GS has been completely stripped and needs quite a substantial amount of work to bring it back to its original self.

But this is what Brett is good at and what he likes to do. He has the knowledge, experience, patience, shed, equipment and support for it, and he gets a great deal of satisfaction from bringing these classics from the Aussie muscle car era back to pristine condition.

CLUBBING

Around Christmas 2014 Brett and some of his mates kicked off a new car club for fans of Ford's Aussie V8s. It's called the Falcon GT Enthusiasts Club Inc. and you don't have to own a GT to join, you only need to like them. They're also welcoming of what they refer to as "peer" vehicles; i.e. other cars based on the Falcon, Fairmont, Fairlane and LTD. Their website is www.falcongtenthusiastsclubinc.com or you can find them on Facebook to see what they've been up to lately. PG



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WICKED WORKSHOP:
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Since founding Seven82Motors in 2006 Ben Atkinson has expanded the operation from an import business to also be a custom car building shop



BUY THE

NUMBERS

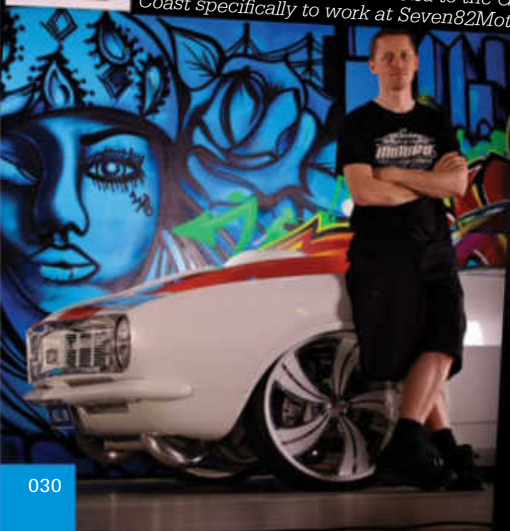
STORY BY SAM HOLLIER PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL WARD



WICKED WORKSHOP:
SEVEN82MOTORS
CUSTOM CARS & IMPORTS



Mechanic and fabricator Adrian was hired primarily on the strength of the twin-turbo V8 Camaro that he and his mates built which placed in the Top 20 at Summernats 2013. He sold his house and moved from Canberra to the Gold Coast specifically to work at Seven82Motors



This 1928 Ford hot rod is a closed-cab pickup. The modified 5L V8 engine and diff are from a '90s Falcon XR8 and there is also a C4 3-speed transmission





Ben has been mates with Josh Kennedy for over 15 years. Josh floats between helping Chris in the workshop and helping Ben in the showroom. He also uses his paint and panel experience when the crew are in the USA buying cars for customers



Seven82Motors got its name from the address of the unit that Ben Atkinson rented when he first ventured out on his own. It was Unit 7 Number 82 and the name has continued on even though the address has since changed. Ben established the shop in 2006 after trying out two previous, and relatively short-lived, business partnerships that didn't quite fit him properly.

Ben's interest in cars started with an XB Falcon hardtop that his step-dad used to own. Years later Ben went looking for one to do up as a project with him and he actually managed to find the exact same car. Showing how close the two were, Ben says the first shop was somewhere for his step-dad to hang out after he'd been diagnosed with Parkinson's.

Ben's automotive background is in sales rather than in mechanics. He also went to an art college and did airbrushing for a little while as a young bloke until his equipment got stolen and he couldn't afford to replace it at the time. He then had little choice but to join the rat race and so he got a "real job" as a guillotine operator at a print factory, but he still hated it after seven years so he decided he wanted to find a way to make a living from cars somehow.

Ben met his genetic father a little more than a decade ago and from him Ben learned about importing vehicles from overseas. It was these types of businesses that Ben kick-started a couple of times as part of the aforementioned partnerships before setting up Seven82Motors as an import business of his own. He then subsequently expanded and evolved the operation to include mechanical and custom fabrication work.

THE TEAM

During the shop's expansion phases Ben assembled a dedicated and passionate team around him to not only continue importing cars for customers but to also compliance them or modify vehicles as much as the customer wants, including ground-up rebuilds with all sorts of custom fabrication made possible by a crew that love what they do.

Chris 'Guido' Langtry is the workshop manager. The way he acquired the nickname Guido is integral with how he came to be a major part of Seven82Motors. Between 2006 and 2008 Chris used to drop in and check out the cool stuff that Ben had in the original premises whilst he actually worked for a nearby mechanical and tyre shop.



WICKED WORKSHOP:
SEVEN82MOTORS
CUSTOM CARS & IMPORTS



**ALL SORTS
OF CUSTOM
FABRICATION IS
MADE POSSIBLE
BY A CREW THAT
LOVE WHAT
THEY DO**

At this stage, before Ben got to know Chris' real name, he started calling him Guido after the forklift in the Cars movie; the little guy that works at Luigi's shop Casa Della Tyres and does that jaw-dropping pit stop to help Lightning McQueen stay on the lead lap in the most important race of the film. The nickname has stuck because Ben still refers to him as Guido regularly.

Chris is a qualified mechanic and he did his apprenticeship at Bentley Auto Repairs in Miami, Queensland, completing it in 2005. After visiting regularly he started working for Ben one day a week, then two, and by 2008 he was full-time. He not only turns spanners though, he frequently gets to apply his fabrication skills on classic metal, which are also his favourite kinds of cars.

Chris doesn't bother with any brand affinity; he just likes the early eras of metal. He has built and owned hot rods and customs of various kinds and his current personal project is a soft blue 1955 Buick 2-door hardtop that was bought on a car-hunting trip to the USA in 2014.

Next member of the team is Josh Kennedy. As the general coordinator Josh

does, well, a bit of everything. He assists both Ben and Chris in the showroom and the workshop as required throughout each day. This works well because Ben affectionately describes him as "easily distracted" so floating between tasks is perfect for him.

Josh and Ben have been mates for about 15 years and at two in the morning, after Josh had sold the latest of a few automotive-related businesses that he started, Ben said "why don't you come and work for me and we'll see how much fun we can have along the way". The beer may have had an influence on that suggestion, but it's definitely an offer, and acceptance, that neither of them regrets.

When the crew go to the USA on one of their car-hunting expeditions Josh's paint and panel experience are called upon at the pre-purchase inspection stage. Back on the Gold Coast Ben describes Josh as "one of those guys that treat the place like he owns it, and that's hard to find."

The workshop also has two more dedicated mechanics and fabricators; Adrian and Alex. Adrian is from Canberra and he

The other mechanic and fabricator is Alex who also moved to the Gold Coast so he could work at Seven82Motors

The red 1970 C10 was restored about five years ago and had travelled less than 13,000 miles since then





Chris Langtry – aka Guido
– is the workshop manager.
If it's in for modifications or
a full build then Chris is in
charge of the project

owns the white twin-turbo V8 '68 Camaro ALL IN. He and his mates built it in his home garage and it made the illustrious Top 20 at Summernats in 2013. Looking to move north he found a new home at Seven82Motors not long after that and he has been indulging in his personal passion for fabrication and customisation in sunny Queensland ever since.

Alex meanwhile is from a small town and he served his apprenticeship at a new-car dealership. A couple of years after he had completed it he moved to the Gold Coast specifically to work at Seven82Motors. That means both he and Adrian are living the dream, working doing what they love in a location that they've each chosen to be, so the whole team is about as ideal for Ben as it is possible to find.





WICKED WORKSHOP:
SEVEN82MOTORS
CUSTOM CARS & IMPORTS

**THE WHOLE TEAM IS ABOUT AS IDEAL
FOR BEN AS IT IS POSSIBLE TO FIND**

THE SHOWROOM

The majority of the cars that you can see in the showroom are there to be sold on consignment, if they haven't been sold already when you read this. Somebody had decided they wanted the silver 2008 Shelby Mustang Super Snake and it was gone before we even had a chance to write this feature, for instance. If a visit isn't convenient their current listings can be found at <http://seven82motors.tradeuniquecars.com.au>.

Seven82Motors also sell wheels, and you can see a large range of them on display along one wall of the showroom (as well as on their website or their Trade Unique Cars listings). Many of these have a nostalgic

look to them, but they're certainly not limited to nostalgic old sizes. There are also a number of brands on offer, and for a variety of fits. They even have some used wheels available, most of which are listed in their eBay store.

THE WORKSHOP

Having moved from the old address to Unit 3 Spencer Road Nerang, in 2012 the shop grew by moving the workshop operations into Unit 2 right next door, leaving Unit 3 available for dedicated showroom space. The workshop has been fitted out with two 2-post hoists plus the crew have loads of tools and equipment available to them. It also has

storage space of its own.

Among the vehicles being worked on there was a black 1966 Impala SS with a 396ci Big Block V8. It belongs to a couple from WA who have so far bought 35 cars through Seven82Motors, and Ben says they have a few clients like that. Many of those have been modified prior to delivery too and the Impala was improved to the same fastidiously-high standard; the sheet metal was smoothed with all holes removed, the exhaust, wheels, sound system and other aspects have all been upgraded, an air-bag system was installed and lots of little things were done to refine the vehicle ready for comfortable and trouble-free cruising prior to sending it west-side.



On one of the hoists you can see a bright blue 1972 Ford Torino GT with the plates MEE TOY and this hardtop has been undergoing a full rebuild. Mechanically it has a 429ci V8, a twin 3in exhaust system, a C6 3-speed and a 9in diff. There is also now a custom steel dashboard and Chris told us that leather and suede upholstery was about to go in. The car will leave the shop as a driver ready to hit the streets again.

On the other hoist is a 1957 Chev pickup. That's another full build that the crew have undertaken and it has now had its chassis undertaken, a 4-link rear end fitted and air-bags installed. An early '80s C10 front clip was also used underneath the classic body and it is powered by a Small Block Chev V8. This will be another street cruiser.

Unit 3 is the showroom with cars and wheels for sale, whilst Unit 2 is the dedicated workshop for building and modifying cars to customer requirements



WICKED WORKSHOP:
SEVEN82MOTORS
CUSTOM CARS & IMPORTS



The XW Falcon is a very neat and tough GT tribute with a range of modifications that includes a 393ci stroker Cleveland V8 running on E85 and making 510rwhp



The 1957 Chevrolet Nomad is a 2-door station wagon. It's not a sedan delivery because it featured a back seat and the Bel Air's level of trim, so it definitely wasn't intended for tradies to carry tools and hardware



And one more car, among several, that is in the shop for a ground-up rebuild is a white LX Torana hatch. It came in for the modified LS1 and 6-speed from a written-off VY to be installed and it has stayed for a new front end with tubular arms and coilovers, plus Wilwood brakes and Vintage

Air to go in. Chris describes it as "a bit of a Pro Touring build". It's also getting black leather and suede upholstery and lots of other good gear. A build like this usually takes 12-18 months to complete and this Torana is another car that will be completed before it leaves. **PG**

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This family photo is of Ben (shop owner), his wife Katrina, their son Lucas who is 10 and their daughter Millie who is 7

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EPIC EVENT:
GT-R CHALLENGE
DRAG BATTLE



RUNWAY



Don't ask why. Just read the number plate



STORY BY ADRIAN HODGSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOTIVE DVD

There's nothing like street cars racing on a street surface to separate the talkers from the doers. Welcome to Cootamundra!

RACING

**EPIC EVENT:
GT-R CHALLENGE
DRAG BATTLE**

**THE EVENT IS SPLIT
UP INTO GT-R, 2WD
AND 4WD FOR THE
TIMED CATEGORIES
TO SEE WHO HAS
THE QUICKEST
STREET CARS IN
THE COUNTRY**

"I like Cootamundra because
it is all street registered GT-Rs
and the best of the best
usually come here"

GLEN EL-HELOU - GTR28L R32 GT-R





Dennis Resi is best known for racing his Lightning McQueen inspired R32 at World Time Attack, but for Cootamundra he borrowed a mate's R33

Motive DVD's GT-R Challenge and Drag Battle has grown in size, speed and mayhem every year since it started in 2009. What started as a fun thrash session on a runway has turned into a stomping ground for some of Australia's quickest street cars, and that is the whole point – street cars, on street tyres racing on a street surface. There is no arguing that cars run slower times at Cootamundra than they do at a prepped track, but the challenge of getting a good time on the Cootamundra airport surface is part of the appeal. The other part is the event vibe.



"Cootamundra has become the street stage for the quickest GT-Rs in Australia"

ROBERT MARJAN – JUN II R32 GT-R



**EPIC EVENT:
GT-R CHALLENGE
DRAG BATTLE**

RWD winner Mark Axisa took time to celebrate with friends



The event is an invite-only film shoot, so it's for drivers, crew and workshops only. It makes for a tight knit community that takes over the little country town for two days to race hard, have fun and party. Driver's get to let loose on the thrash pad, have plenty of wide open space to test and perfect their launches and thanks to the capped number of cars, they get plenty of runs in a day. It truly is heaven for mental street car owners.



It's unlikely you'll see so many 1000hp RB26s in the one place anywhere else

**THE EVENT IS
AN INVITE-ONLY
FILM SHOOT, SO
IT'S FOR DRIVERS,
CREW AND
WORKSHOPS ONLY**



The 'Who needs traction' award went to this big power FG Falcon. Pointless. Awesome!



**EPIC EVENT:
GT-R CHALLENGE
DRAG BATTLE**



Adam Neish drove his 1000hp JEM demo car all the way from Sydney – kicked arse on the runway – then drove all the way home. That's reliable power!



You could replace just about all of these labels with the word "fun"

The event is split up into GT-R, 2WD and 4WD for the timed categories to see who has the quickest street cars in the country. Solo runs means drivers can concentrate on getting the best out of the car, but also allows Motive DVD to capture each car on its own with no background noise or distractions, so you get to hear the cars better than you can anywhere else. GT-Rs have dominated the outright leader board since day one, but plenty of quick Evos and WRXs have now made their way into the upper end of the rankings. You need be running low-to-mid 9s to make the Top 10 leader board these days!

Once the solo runs are done, it is time for the Drag Battle Shootout. The cars are





JOHN APOSTOLOPOULOS
- RH9 R32 GT-R



"It can be anyone's game. This year there is a lot of competitive cars here"



ONCE THE SOLO RUNS ARE DONE, IT IS TIME FOR THE DRAG BATTLE SHOOTOUT



**EPIC EVENT:
GT-R CHALLENGE
DRAG BATTLE**

split into 2WD and 4WD to keep things fair and the pairings are worked out by a good old fashioned "draw out of the hat". There are always some pretty interesting match-ups and some great races, but you'll have to grab yourself a copy of Motive DVD #25 to check the out. Once a 2WD and 4WD winner is determined they then go head-to-head for an outright winner. **PG**



Outright winner and all 'round nice guy Hamza was another JEM customer who drove down and back from Sydney. He also did more passes than anyone. What a performance!

**JOHN STAVROPOLOUS -
TROJAN MOTORSPORT**



"Dedicated race cars are a whole different kettle of fish so this is more fun for everyone and it is more realistic"



The engine in JUNII is something to behold. You're looking at around 1400hp right there

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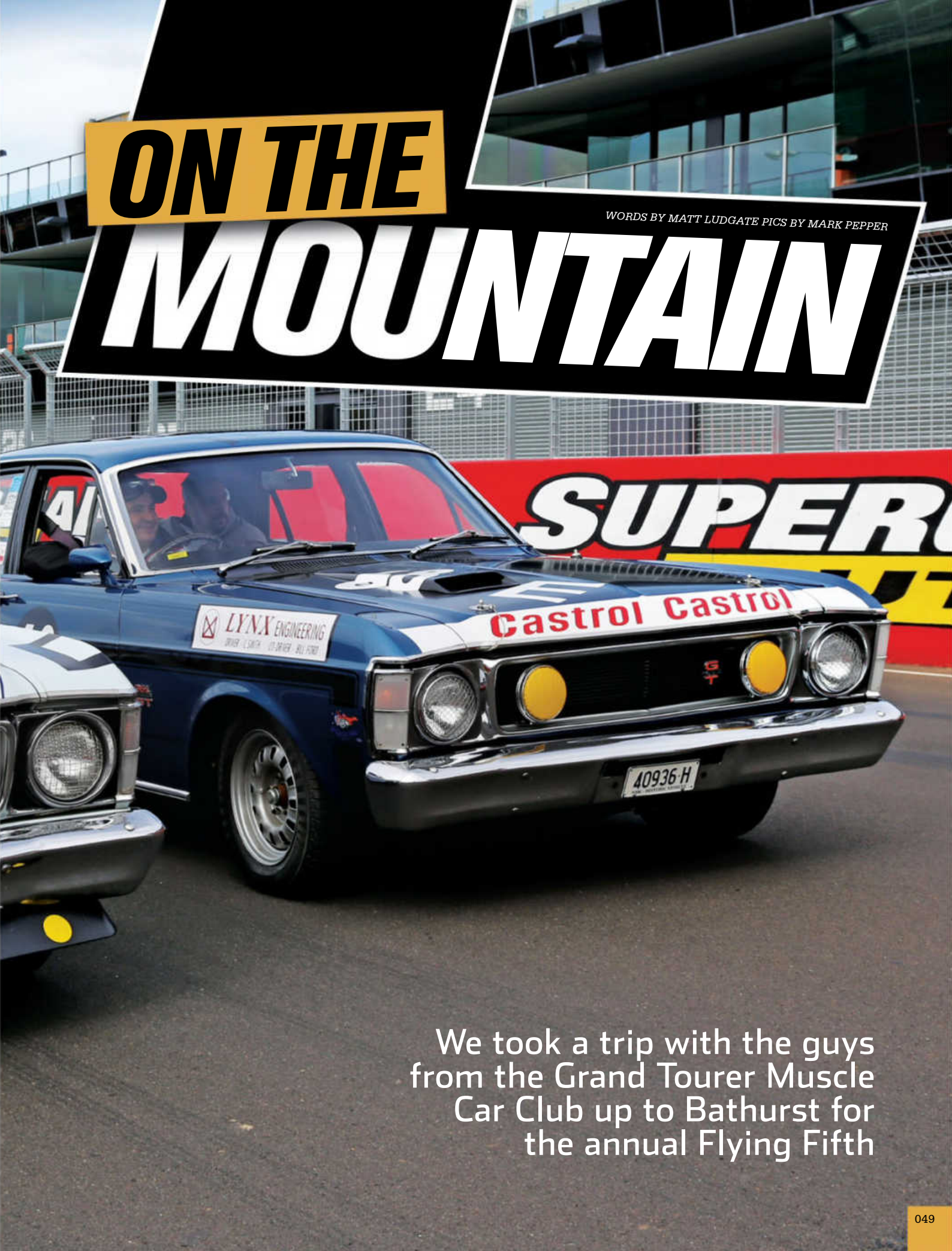
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EPIC EVENT
FLYING FIFTH
ON THE MOUNTAIN





ON THE

WORDS BY MATT LUDGATE PICS BY MARK PEPPER

MOUNTAIN

We took a trip with the guys from the Grand Tourer Muscle Car Club up to Bathurst for the annual Flying Fifth

EPIC EVENT
FLYING FIFTH
ON THE MOUNTAIN

For years now I have hear about an event held at Bathurst called the flying Fifth and by all reports it was a must see for any car enthusiast. The Flying Fifth has been held for many years and consists of driving your car down Conrod Straight over a 1/5th mile to see how fast you can go and when an invitation was offered from the guys at the Grand Tourer Muscle Car Club I jumped at the chance to join them.

With an early 6am start on a cold and wet Sunday morning I was surprised at

just how many muscle cars arrived at the meeting point ready to head up through the mountains for an early morning cruise. A lot of muscle car owners like to baby their cars and refuse to take them out at the first sign of rain however the Grand Tourer guys believe in driving their cars the way they were intended.

Upon arriving at the track we made our way to the back of the pit area where the drivers headed over to have their cars scrutineered before lining up to make their way up to the top of the mountain.



LEO'S XW GT

When Leo DiNatales bought his XW GT as a project he thought he had found himself a clean and genuine car for himself to restore. Imagine his surprise when he found out that this car was in fact a genuine Bathurst race car and not only that it was the only auto transmission car to enter that year. After making this discovery he embarked on a complete restoration from top to bottom returning it back to its '69 Bathurst livery he has not stopped enjoying it since.



This purpose built XE Falcon was easily the loudest car to come down the mountain on the day



THE EVENT IS OPEN TO ALL MAKES AND MODELS OF CARS HOWEVER IT WAS THE SOUND OF A V8 SINGING AT HIGH REVS THAT WAS WHAT WE WANTED TO SEE



Con Alexpoulos attended the day in his immaculate Wild Plum XA GT and even with a fuel issue still managed an impressive 131mph

EPIC EVENT
FLYING FIFTH
ON THE MOUNTAIN



**NICK'S
XW GTHO**

In 1969 a privateer called Mike Savva entered a brand new XW GT HO into the Hardie Ferodo 500 and after the race returned the GT HO back into a street car and sold it off. For many years the car lead an interesting

life with several owners which included being stolen and the whole time no one knew of its interesting history until current owner Nick Zorbas discovered the car and returned it to its Bathurst livery.

Not one to let his cars sit idle on display Nick and the original owner Mike took the car back to the mountain where Nick launched it down the mountain to a top speed of 126.5mph





We and many others drove over to a viewing area where we could get a good viewing where we could see the cars coming into "The Chase" at the end of Conrod Straight.

The event is open to all makes and models of cars however it was the sound of a V8 singing at high revs that was what we wanted to see and we were not disappointed as many Holdens and Fords made their way down the straight chasing a high top speed. Quite a few of the Grand Tourer members had entered their cars and it was great seeing some very rare pieces of Aussie muscle hitting the redline as they

THE GUYS FROM THE GRAND TOURER MUSCLE CAR CLUB ARE NOT AFRAID TO DRIVE THEIR CARS THE WAY THEY WERE INTENDED



Steve Parashis bought his genuine XT GT 39 years ago for \$2800 as his first car and became quite heavily involved in drag racing until someone told him he should have a go at the flying fifth. Steve had never heard of such an event but in 1985 he decided to head to Bathurst to check it out from there he was hooked and has not missed an event since with this year being his 30th year.

We think that attending the same event for 30 consecutive years in the same car no less is quite achievement and well worth a mention and after talking to Steve he has no intention in stopping anytime soon.



EPIC EVENT
FLYING FIFTH
ON THE MOUNTAIN



John's 1972 XA GS has been in his possession since 2007 and in that time has seen the original 302 V8 upgraded to 351ci with a swag of headwork. Running through the original Top Loader 4-speed John has fitted a 9-inch diff with a 3.9:1 LSD centre which has helped the car to run a 12.8 quarter mile



Dennis Kondonis knows his XA GT Falcon better than anybody as he has owned the Yellow Glo sedan since 1985. Back in the '80s and when 1970s muscle cars were affordable 17yo Dennis forked out \$5500 for his dream car complete with long range tank and popular for the time big chrome 12 slotters. Over the years Dennis had a lot of fun with the car which has seen him engine rebuilds in order to see it produce some good horsepower.

As you can imagine the GT or "Zante" as its known is part of the Kondonis family and is enjoyed by the whole family and obviously is not leaving their possession anytime soon. On the day Dennis ran a top speed of 126mph with the Cleveland singing a very sweet tune through its twin pipes.

sped past us and from tough street cars to irreplaceable ex race cars there was certainly no shortage of horsepower.

At the end of each session a list goes up where drivers can see their top speed and if they want head back up the mountain to see if they can improve their top speed, basically heaven for speed freaks. PG

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This was one very sinister looking Shelby styled Mustang and sounded as tough as it looked too



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HOLDEN HAVEN:
HUNTER HORSEPOWER
NEWCASTLE MATES

MATES AND

MOTORS

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BEN HOSKING

A love of all things Holden and horsepower brought these guys together in high school and they're still wrenching and cruising together decades later



Our intrepid photographer and scribe Ben Hosking used to live in the Newcastle area and still spends plenty of time there finding cool cars and sheds for us to feature. Over the last few years, he's photographed a string of nice Holdens and as it turned out, many of the owners knew each other. Not just casually either, but some of these guys have been friends since high school!

"I went to high school with Darren Hawkins," says 46-year-old Stephen Davies. All the guys are around this age and have met via the ever-thriving Novacastrian car scene, as Shane Brown states, "We all live in Newcastle and it's like a big country town. We're all mates and mates of mates. You know how it goes".

Some guys have met one another via local institutions like Webby's Speed Shop in

Carrington and Ansen's Tyre & Auto (where our photo shoot takes place), at long-gone events like the burnout competitions at the old Newcastle Motordrome and perhaps most prominently, through cruising the streets of NSW's second-largest city. On this one sunny Sunday morning, we were able to wrangle some 10 of them into one place.

All the guys assembled here got into cars along similar lines: via their dads or friends and close connections continue to this day, with the guys often helping out on one another's builds or at least offering the advice of experienced hands. "We all have a lot of skills in different areas," says Darren Smith, owner of the sweet triple-fed LC coupe. "Some of the guys have built great cars over the years so they have some great advice and taste and sometimes it's just

great to have a beer with them and check out their latest projects."

Even though modern life sees all the gents with families and jobs take up significant chunks of time and money, they generally group together every four to six weeks for a cruise. "We're always talking to one another via Facebook and go for cruises somewhere different every time for lunch or something," Stephen Davies says.

Between them, the group boasts an impressive number of years of experience – and amusing anecdotes about life in the local car scene with stories of illegal street racing at the infamous Kooragang Island industrial area and boozy nights on the piss among them. But at the end of the day, it's all about mateship and enjoying a shared passion: modified Aussie muscle. **PG**



HOLDEN HAVEN: HUNTER HORSEPOWER NEWCASTLE MATES



This is how Darren's Torana looked when we first saw it a few years ago, powered by a 600hp 1JZ setup

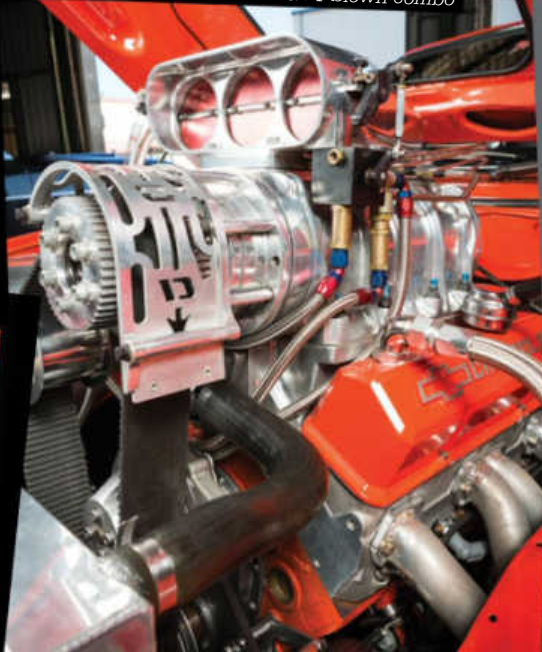


DARREN HAWKINS

Holden fans were first made aware of Darren Hawkins' brilliantly tough LH Torana when it appeared on the pages of our sister magazine Xtreme Holdens a few years back – sporting a boosted Toyota 1JZ power plant. Backed by a Supra 5-speed and 9in, the car was making a prodigious 619rwhp back then, but not too long after our photo shoot Darren decided to swap the unconventional engine out for a balls-out 6/71-blown small-block combo. Not much else about the car has changed through the process. Darren couldn't make it out for our group photo shoot, but sent the car along anyway so we could check out the new iteration of the car which copped plenty of attention from his assembled mates.



Darren's new setup heads in a more traditional territory with an angry, ally-headed and 6/71-blown combo



DENNIS LEGG

Like most of the other guys we're featuring here, Dennis and his EH sedan have been featured in our sister magazines previously – and for good reason too, with the purple people eater boasting a mean methanol-sucking small-block and huge wheel tubs filled with big rubber. The car was a long time in the build, with Dennis regularly showing off the EH at local car shows during the build-in-progress. Caged, tubbed and complete, the sedan is one tough machine that has been built to punish. Step inside and you'll find a totally custom tan leather trim with the rear section created from scratch to accommodate the big wheel tubs. Dennis loves his EHs and has owned a string of them over the years.

The new methanol-fed SBC is an angry beast of a thing, but smells wonderful!



The rear bench has had to be extensively remodelled to suit the big wheel tubs

The rear wheels on Dennis' EH give you an idea of what's going on under the bonnet



**HOLDEN HAVEN:
HUNTER HORSEPOWER
NEWCASTLE MATES**



BYRON PROUSE

Byron's EH is due to be featured in Xtreme Holdens soon and is the consummate street car, with a sweet EFI twin throttle setup flowing prodigious amounts of air into its Holden stroker. Originally a 179ci six-powered car (still wearing its original badges!), there's no mistaking the change these days, with a loud exhaust heralding its arrival from blocks away. Byron's partner says she's been waiting for a new kitchen for ages, due to the funds pouring into the EH, but we reckon her sacrifice has been worth it, with the EH now a super clean cruiser, ready to head out with the boys on long drives at any time.



DAVE ANDREWS

Dave Andrews is no stranger to magazine features, actually having graced the cover of Performance Garage in 2014 and his bright red LH Torana sedan has also found itself featured in sister magazine Xtreme Holdens back in 2012. Dave has owned a long line of Toranas over the years, ranging from all-out drag weapons to cool cruisers like this one. Powered by a 330rwhp 355ci Holden stroker with a shiny COME Racing twin-throttle EFI manifold on top, the sedan is thoroughly customised inside and out and sees plenty of cruising time, both around the Newcastle area and further afield to regional car shows. Dave parks the LH next to his well-known green HB sedan that was formerly a regular drag racer in the late 1980s and 1990s. He says the HB will be making a comeback soon with its new big-cube small-block combo.

Dave's Torana runs a neat COME Racing twin-throttle-equipped Holden V8 – perfect for plenty of sunny day cruising



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**HOLDEN HAVEN:
HUNTER HORSEPOWER
NEWCASTLE MATES**



A neat Holden six with triples powers the LC coupe, setting it apart from the rest of the group and their V8-powered cars



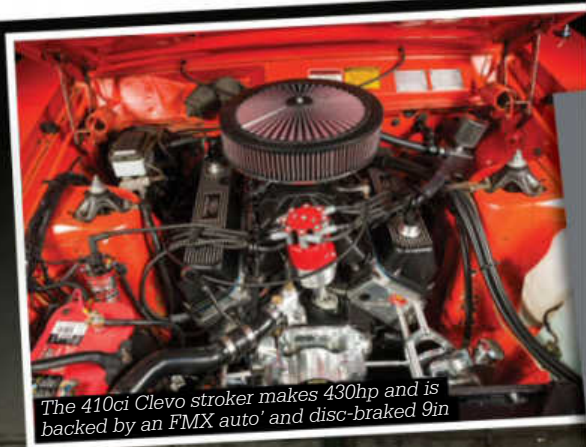
DARREN SMITH

With his LC coupe being the only six cylinder car in the bunch, we wonder if Darren Smith cops any flack from the other guys over his two missing cylinders! While the power is untested, the 186ci straight six boasts triple 45mm Delorto carbs, a Yella Terra Bathurst head, roller rockers, straight-cut gears, Clive Cams camshaft, H&M headers and it's backed by a built Trimatic and narrowed BTR78 diff' with LSD – so it's certainly no slouch! Amazingly, Darren has owned the coupe since 1986 and was his second ever purchase after his first LJ was written off. The paint has been on the car since 1988! He's rightly proud of the little Holden, with most of the work having been completed by himself and his mates in the shed.



SHANE BROWN

We really feel for Shane Brown. He's living amongst a great collection of car guys, no doubt. But he's also the only one not driving a Holden or GM-related product – sure he cops some flack for it! Well, perhaps. But when your 1978 Fairmont is making more horsepower than most of the cars in the group, the friendly ribbing is probably a bit more subdued than it could be. Shane's GXL makes 430hp thanks to its 410ci Clevo stroker that features partial grout filling, Scat rotating assembly, AFD alloy heads, custom hydraulic roller valvetrain and a modified Holley carb' from AED. He's had the car for around eight years and it was in superb factory condition when he bought it – having left the paint and trim as-is so far.



The 410ci Clevo stroker makes 430hp and is backed by an FMX auto' and disc-braked 9in



Shane is the odd man out when it comes to this group, thanks to his 1978 Fairmont GXL



**"WE'RE ALWAYS
TALKING AND GO FOR
CRUISES SOMEWHERE
DIFFERENT EVERYTIME FOR
LUNCH OR SOMETHING"
— STEPHEN DAVIES**



STEPHEN DAVIES

Powered by a 355ci Holden stroker V8, Stephen Davies' HJ Holden sedan is currently making a little over 300rwhp, however he says the combo has never been properly tuned. He's had the car for around four and a half years having found it with its original six and three-on-the-tree column-shift auto'. Today, that's been replaced by a T400 and you'll find a 9in out the back. Stephen says he first stepped into the world of modified Holdens way back in 1989 with his first HJ Statesman, which was powered by a 253ci and after that he had an HX. He's not quite done with the car yet, with plans including a Vortech blower setup and then a few runs down the Sydney Dragway strip.



Stephen's HJ sedan runs
a tough 355ci stroker
Holden V8 that makes
just over 300rwhp

**HOLDEN HAVEN:
HUNTER HORSEPOWER
NEWCASTLE MATES**



Andrew Somerville (aka SOK11T) cruised his tough BBC-powered '69 Camaro to the shoot. The Yenko-emblazoned coupe is built to drive and he loves getting it out at every opportunity



Our hosts for the day, Michael and Michelle Ansen of Ansen's Tyre & Auto, are currently rebuilding this immaculate 1957 Chev' four-door. They've had it some 12 years, originally buying it in "a million pieces" and it's now finally getting close to completion



Dave Andrew's dad, Bob Andrews, cruised out for the shoot in his gorgeous HR

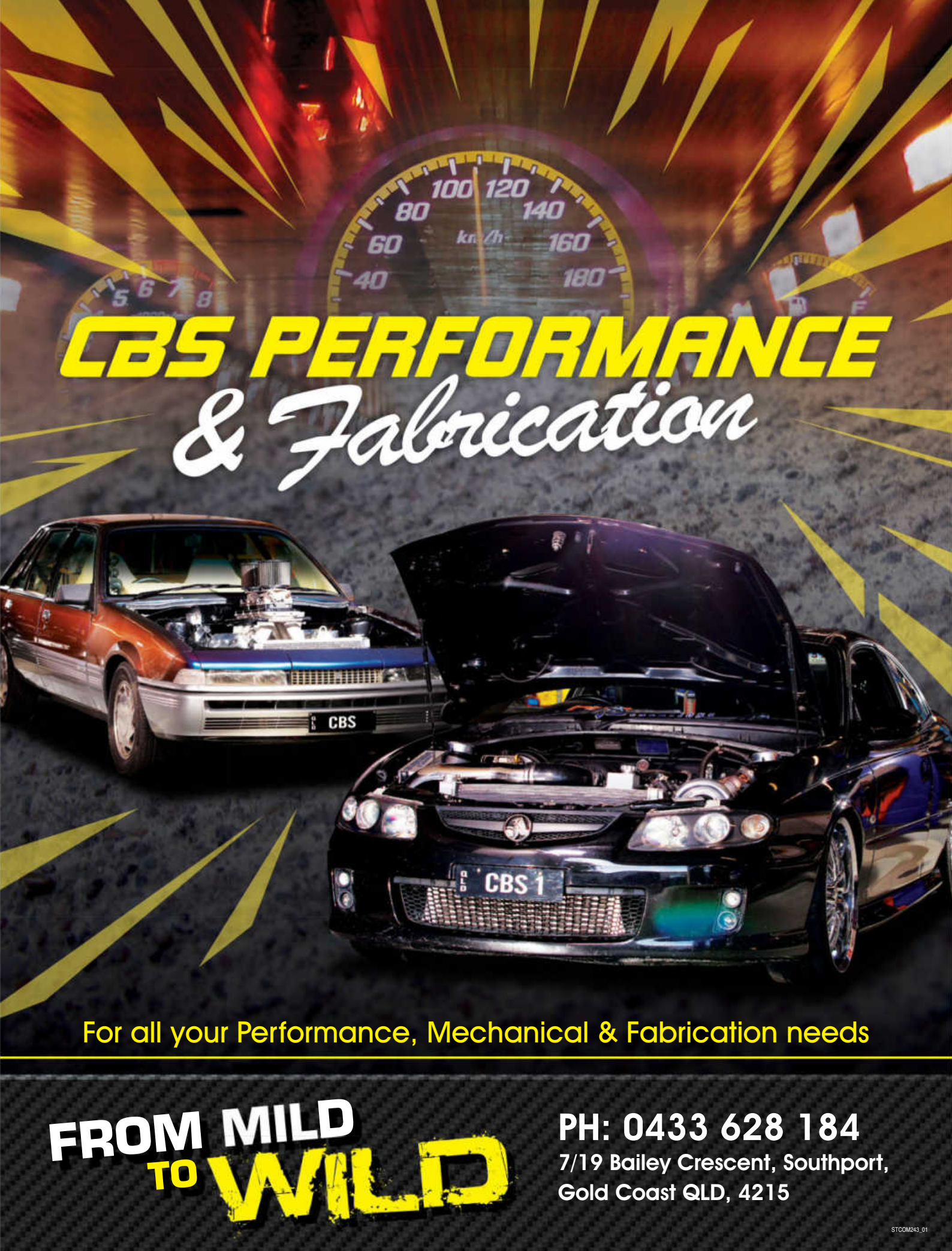


After the shoot, everyone headed out for a cruise to a nearby pub to enjoy the sunny Sunday morning



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KILLER SHED:
RYAN & STUART'S
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THE THUNDERBIRD

Another fantastic survivor car is Stuart's 1964 Ford Thunderbird. Powered by a 390ci big block and three-speed column shift, the car has a measly 12,890 miles on the clock and the only damage to the entire car is a small tear in the driver's seat which both say they can't bring themselves to repair. The only modification made to the car is a 2.5in exhaust system, with the rest remaining as Ford intended.

Being in the car game for a living, Stuart is in an enviable position to snap up great cars when the opportunities arise and told us this beauty came to him when someone "needed the money". "We just plan to keep it clean and factory. It's not broke, there's no point fixing it," Ryan says.

The original 390ci big block has a mere 12,000 miles on the clock!

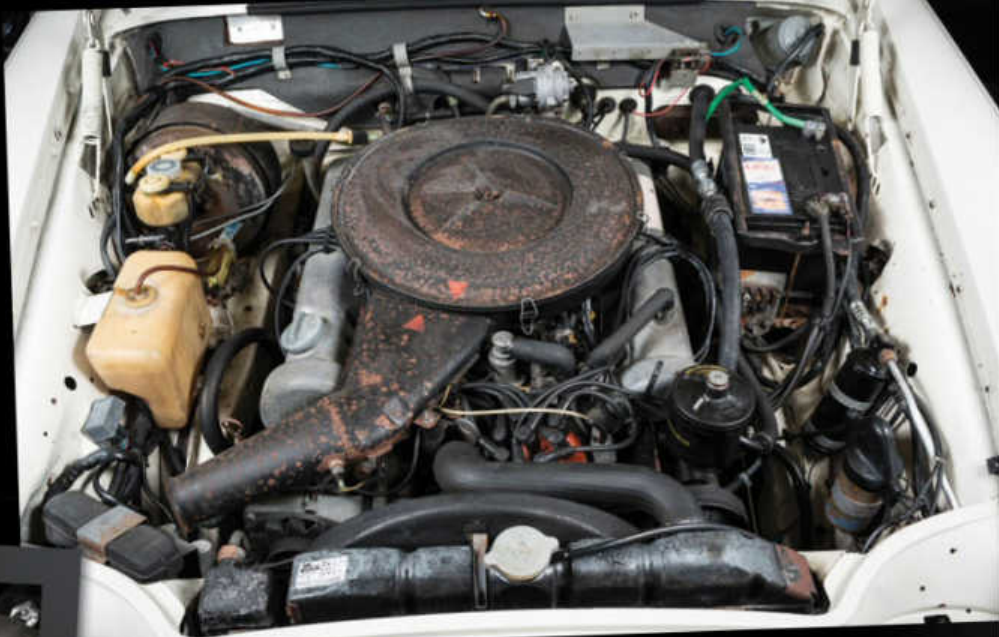


Except for a small tear in the seat, the cabin of the T-bird looks as fresh as it was in 1964

Hard to believe this car is all original



On the day of our visit to the family storage facility, there were some 15 vehicles in the warehouse in various stages of completion with some belonging to Stuart and most others in the care of Ryan. Stuart's all about restoration and saving survivor cars as they are, with the 1975 Mercedes and 1964 Thunderbird good examples of that ethos (see breakouts). In contrast, Ryan loves to tinker and modify and the garage is crammed with old Holdens and big plans.



The 3.5L factory V8 is still purring like a kitten after 40 years

THE MERCEDES

This is a 1975 Mercedes 280SE 3.5L coupe and we'd forgive you for thinking you'd never seen one before, as Stuart tells us only 3000 were ever made. The Cave's have had the coupe now for about six months and it came into their collection as-is. It hasn't seen much street time as the thought of having to repair it should some Sydney bozo crash into them has proven too off-putting. "He's constantly worried someone is going to hit you and because there were only 3000 ever manufactured finding replacement parts wouldn't be easy," son Ryan says.

Stuart told us the convertible versions have previously sold for as much as \$300,000, with the coupe versions, like his, have been more around the \$150k mark. The only thing they have planned for the car is to source a factory stereo.



The Germans really knew how to design a classy interior

**PERHAPS THE
HARDEST PART
OF OWNING THIS
MANY UNFINISHED
PROJECTS WOULD
BE KNOWING WHERE
TO START**

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**KILLER SHED:
RYAN & STUART'S
COOL CAR CAVE**



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Here's a breakdown of what was in store when we visited: 1958 FC Holden awaiting resto, 1978 UC Torana destined for big things, Morris Mini 850 restored, 1964 Thunderbird with 12,890 original miles, HZ Tonner with a 327ci V8, 1964 Cadillac Fleetwood with 454ci big block in original condition, 1979 Triumph TR7, HQ ute with factory 253ci V8, 1975 Statesman with 253ci V8, 1974 LH Torana, HQ Tonner with 202ci six, 1990 VN Commodore Executive, another UC Torana but a clean one-owner car, 1975 Mercedes Benz 280SE coupe, LJ Torana sedan, HZ Kingswood wagon with 202ci six and a 1973 KE20 Corolla. Perhaps the hardest part of owning this many unfinished projects would be knowing where to start! **PG**

Ryan's Morris Mini 850 enjoyed a two-year restoration. He tells us he tried to keep it as original as possible, but the factory trim was just too degraded and replacement OE-style fabric unavailable, so a bright red upholstery was fitted to liven things up





There are even more cars laying in wait to the right, with the storage facility holding 15 cars on the day we visited. Some highlights included a 1979 Triumph TR7, LJ Torana, 1958 FC and of course, the Mercedes, Thunderbird and Caddy

Dad Stuart's 1964 Cadillac Fleetwood boasts a 454ci big block, backed by a three-on-the-tree column shift auto



THE TORANA

While most of the cars in the Cave collection are destined for factory restorations, Ryan's UC Torana certainly isn't. Originally a 202ci/Trimatic sedan, Ryan is replacing the combo with a red 308ci Holden V8 that he's planning to stroke out to 383ci, topped with an 8/71 blower and backed by a 9in. "I'm hoping for 750rwhp," Ryan says.

Aesthetically, Ryan is planning for the UC to feature a "granny spec" look, complete with early SL/E wheels, beige paint, brown trim, sun visor and venetian blinds. In stark contrast, the engine combo will be pure aggression and very hard to miss. "I'd love to take it to Toranafest 2016 and see the reactions I would get from having a beige granny spec' UC Torana with a 383ci stroker and 8/71 blower," he says.

Ryan has some big plans for the UC Torana, with a 383ci stroker motor and 8/71 in stark contrast to the "granny spec" exterior



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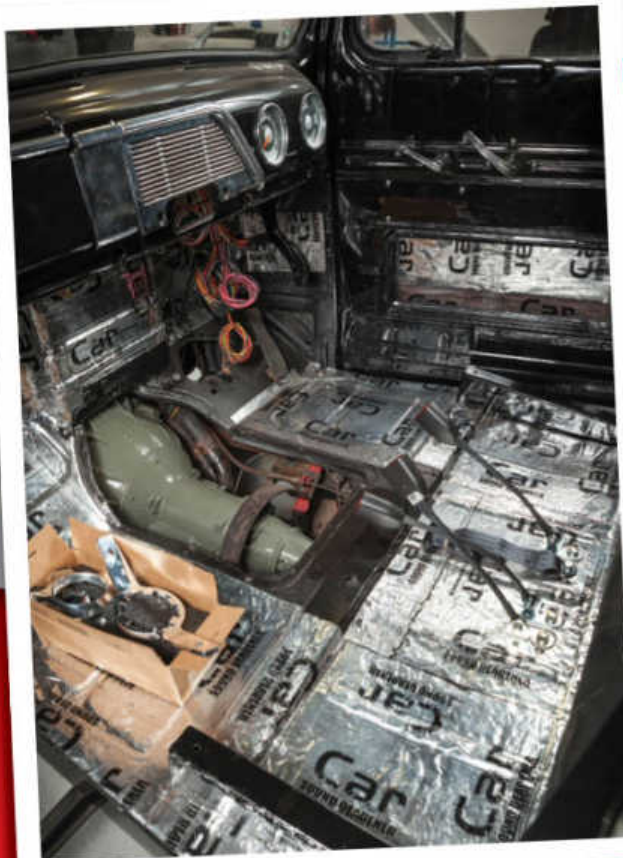
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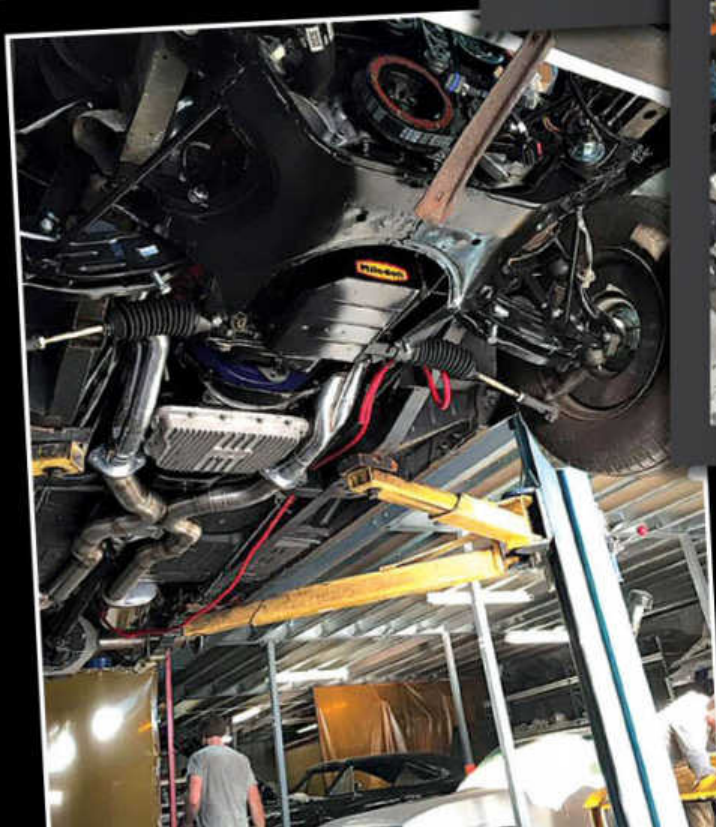
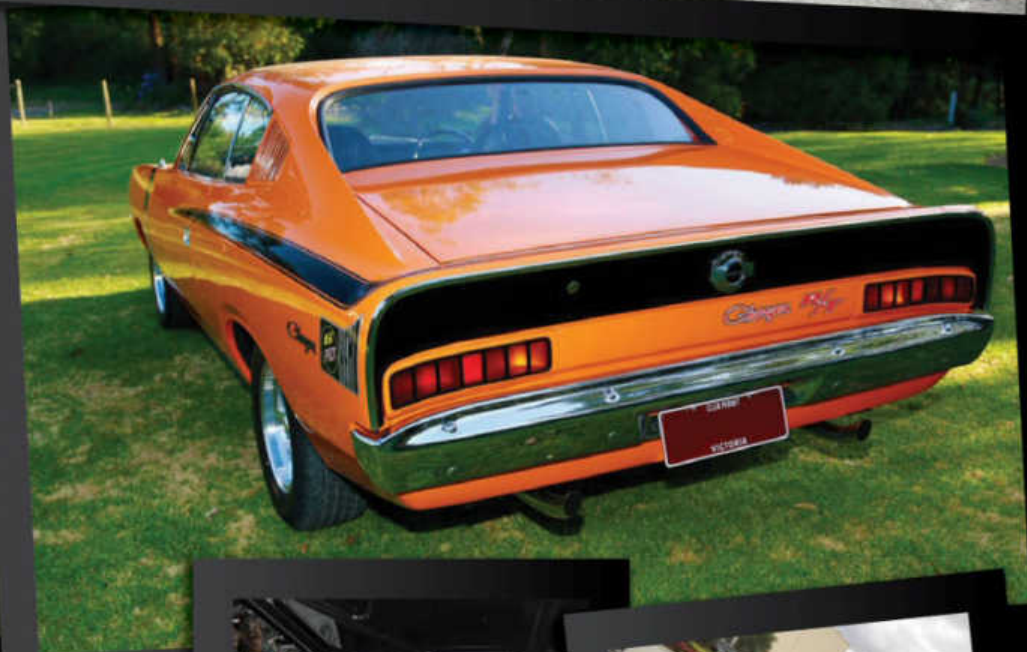
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A large orange car body, likely a 1960s Ford Mustang, is shown in a workshop. The car is missing its front end and has its doors open. It is sitting on a dolly. In the background, a silver car is visible. The workshop has various tools and equipment.

SNAPSHOT:
WICKED WORKSHOP
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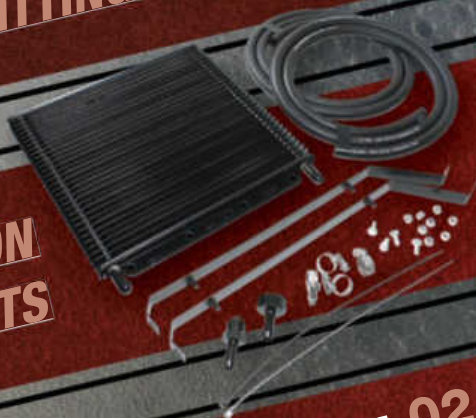
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